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THE VAULT OF HORROR®

FEATURING...



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



J. HAN
CRAIG



GADZOOKS!
MY JOY KNOWS
NO BOUNDS! I
HAVE JUST RECEIVED
MY **E.C. FAN-ADDICT
CLUB MEMBERSHIP
KIT** WHICH INCLUDES
A FULL COLOR
7½X10½ ILLUMINATED
CERTIFICATE, A STURDY
WALLET **IDENTIFICATION
CARD**, AN ATTRACTIVE
EMBROIDERED
SHOULDER PATCH,
AND A STUNNING
ANTIQUE BRONZE-
FINISH BAS-
RELIEF **PIN**. SO
WHAT!

SO WHAT? SO YOU, TOO, CAN JOIN THE **E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!**

FOR AN **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP**, FILL OUT THE **COUPON** AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH **25¢**. IF **FIVE OR MORE** OF YOU WISH TO JOIN AS AN **AUTHORIZED CHAPTER**, ENCLOSE **EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS**, ALONG WITH **25¢ FOR EACH NAME**, AND INDICATE THE **NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT**. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS **CHAPTER NUMBER**. **EVERY MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL**, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT **DIRECTLY... BY RETURN MAIL**.

THE **E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB**
ROOM 706
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK 12, N.Y.

SO, ALL RIGHT! SO HERE'S MY TWO BITS. SO MAKE ME A MEMBER, ALREADY, AND SEND ME THE THINGS AND STUFF LIKE WHAT THE KID UP THERE GOT... SO!

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ ZONE NO. _____
STATE _____

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THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! HELLO, THERE, YOU CRAZY MIXED-UP KID! I'M HAPPY TO SEE THAT YOU HAVE GATHERED ENOUGH COURAGE TO VENTURE ONCE AGAIN INTO THE VAULT! CLEAR AWAY THAT PILE OF WITHERED, MAGGOTY BONES AND SIT DOWN! DID YOU BRING YOUR SHRUNKEN-EYE-BALL-GOOD-LUCK-CHARM? I WANT YOU TO BE WELL PREPARED FOR THE HORRIFYING HAIR-RAISER I'M ABOUT TO TELL! YOU'LL LIKE THIS ONE, I'M SURE... SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADDO, LET'S BEGIN THE STORY CALLED...

STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT!

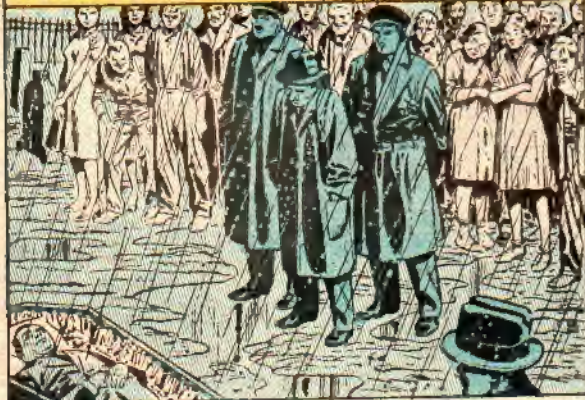


DUSK HAD SETTLED OVER THE DRAB GROUNDS OF DETHMOOR, AND THE MISTY RAIN FELL WITH A DIABOLICAL PERSEVERANCE, COVERING ALL WITH A WETNESS THAT WAS MADDENING! HARTLEY QUIMB HUNCHED HIS SHOULDERS AGAINST THE CHILL, AND CURSED SOFTLY...

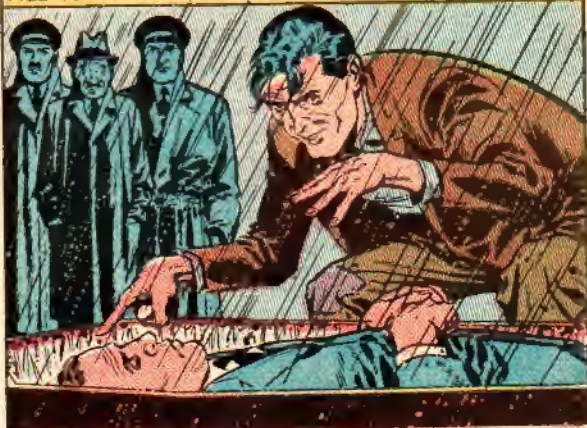


JIMMY
CRAW

HE CURSED THE RAIN AND THE COLD. HE CURSED THE UNIFORMED GUARDS BESIDE HIM AND THE MINISTER BEFORE HIM, THE JIBBERING CROWD SURROUNDING HIM AND THE GNAWING FEAR INSIDE HIM! HE EVEN CURSED THE BODY LYING IN THE UNCOVERED COFFIN!



FROM BEHIND HIM, A FIGURE DARTED TO THE COFFIN AND PLAYFULLY FINGERED THE FACE OF THE CORPSE! NO ONE MADE A MOVE TO STOP HIM! HARTLEY QUIMB WAS HORRIFIED TO THE POINT OF NAUSEA...



THE FIGURE SCURRIED BACK TO THE CROWD. THE MINISTER SPOKE ON, UNINTERRUPTED, AND HARTLEY QUIMB LOWERED HIS GAZE TO THE QUIVERING MUD PUDDLES...



...BIT OF A *SHOCK*, EH, GUV'NOR?

HARTLEY QUIMB TURNED TO LOOK AT THE STERN-FACED GUARD WHO HAD ADDRESSED HIM...



LORD, YES! THAT WAS HORRIBLE!

AYE! BUT IT'S IMPORTANT! YE'LL SEE, AFTER YE'VE BEEN HERE A BIT!

ANOTHER FIGURE CREPT TO THE COFFIN. HE GAZED CURIOUSLY AT THE BODY, HIS EYES SADDENED. THEN, IMPULSIVELY, HE *SLAPPED* THE CORPSE ACROSS THE CHEEK!



GOOD HEAVENS! DID YOU SEE THAT?



AYE! WE LET THEM DO THAT! A FUNERAL IS A *TREAT* TO THESE POOR SOULS... AND IT HELPS US TO *CONTROL* THEM! WE USE IT AS A MEANS TO *ENFORCE DISCIPLINE*!

HARTLEY QUIMB BEGAN TO WAVER! HE SWORE AT HIMSELF FOR EVER HAVING *ACCEPTED* THE POSITION OF MASTER OF DETHMOOR ASYLUM! IF HE HADN'T NEEDED THE MONEY...

DISCIPLINE?



AYE, GUV'NOR! IF THE INMATES DON'T *BEHAVE* THEMSELVES, WE DON'T LET THEM *ATTEND* THE NEXT FUNERAL! IT'S ABOUT THE *ONLY* WAY WE CAN *CONTROL* THEM, UNDERSTAFFED AS WE ARE!

THE COFFIN HAD AT LAST BEEN COVERED, YET A FEW OF THE INMATES RAN FORWARD TO LIFT THE LID SLIGHTLY AND PEER INQUISITIVELY INSIDE! THEN THE COFFIN WAS LOWERED INTO THE GROUND...

THANK GOD! IT'S OVER!

AYE! I GUESS YE'RE A BIT **HUNGRY**, NOT HAVING A BITE TO EAT SINCE YE ARRIVED THIS AFTERNOON! WELL, WE'LL SOON FIX **THAT**!



THE THOUGHT OF FOOD HAD NEVER ENTERED HARTLEY'S MIND, BUT HE WALKED WITH THE GUARDS TO THE MESS HALL, WHICH SEATED BOTH INMATES AND CUSTODIANS ALIKE...

YE MUST UNDERSTAND, SIR! THE INMATES AREN'T **INSANE**! FOR THE MOST PART, THEY'RE MERELY **CHILDISH**! THEY JUST ACT AND THINK LIKE **LITTLE KIDS**!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE **MASTER** WHO PRECEDED **ME**?



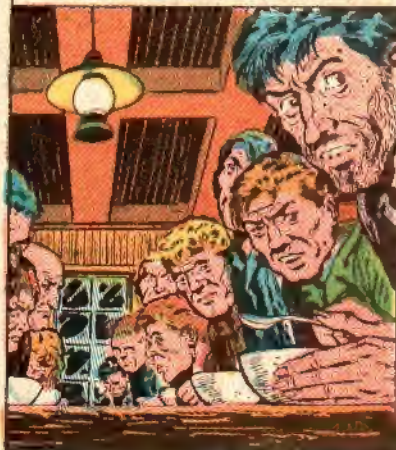
OH, **HIM**, POOR SOUL! THE INMATES **KILLED** HIM WHEN HE TRIED TO TAKE AWAY ALL THEIR **FUNERAL PRIVILEGES**!



HARTLEY QUIMB NERVOUSLY LIFTED THE FORK AND SPEARED A CHOICE PIECE OF STEAK. HE WAS ABOUT TO PLACE IT IN HIS MOUTH WHEN HIS GAZE DRIFTED OUT OVER THE TABLE. HIS HAND TREMBLED...



A HUNDRED GLARING EYES BURNED INTO HIS! A HUNDRED HATE-FILLED EYES WATCHED HIS EVERY MOVE...



SUDDENLY HE SAW THE SLOVENLY FOOD THEY WERE EATING. HE GLANCED AT THE JUICY, TENDER MORSEL OF STEAK ON HIS FORK AND THEN LOOKED AGAIN INTO THEIR VENOMOUS EYES. THE FORK CLATTERED TO THE TABLE AS HE ROSE UNSTEADILY TO HIS FEET...

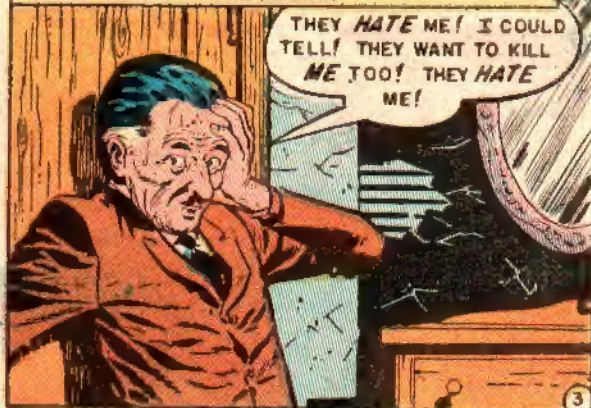
I... I'M **NOT** VERY **HUNGRY**! IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME... I... I THINK I'LL GO TO MY **ROOM**!

WELL... ALL RIGHT, GUV'NOR! MIND IF I TAKE YE'RE **STEAK**?



HARTLEY QUIMB HURRIED FROM THE MESS HALL AS FAST AS HIS WOBBLING LEGS WOULD CARRY HIM, AND CLIMBED THE RICKETY STAIRS TO HIS ROOM! ONCE INSIDE, HE BOLTED THE FLIMSY LOCK AND LEANED HEAVILY AGAINST THE DOOR...

THEY **HATE** ME! I COULD TELL! THEY WANT TO KILL **ME**, TOO! THEY **HATE** ME!



HE THREW HIMSELF ONTO THE BED, GAZED TIREDLY THROUGH THE SKY-LIGHT AT THE SKY. THE RAIN HAD STOPPED...AND HE DOZED...



SUDDENLY HE WAS AWAKENED BY THE GRASPING OF MANY HANDS! HE FELT A CLOTH BEING ROUGHLY SHOVED INTO HIS MOUTH!



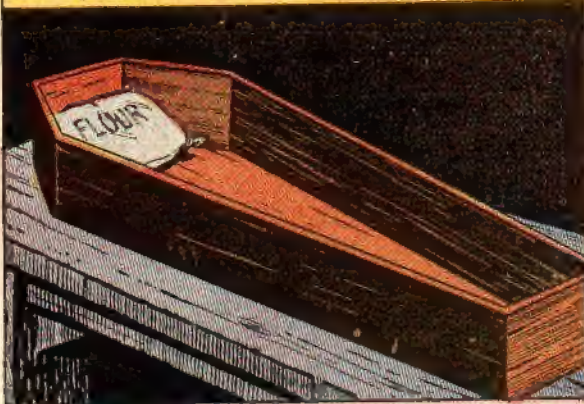
HIS EYES BUGGED OPEN AND BEHELD A SIGHT THAT FROZE HIS HEART BEAT! A DOZEN INMATES SURROUNDED HIS BED, FIENDISHLY TYING HIM WITH STOUT ROPES!



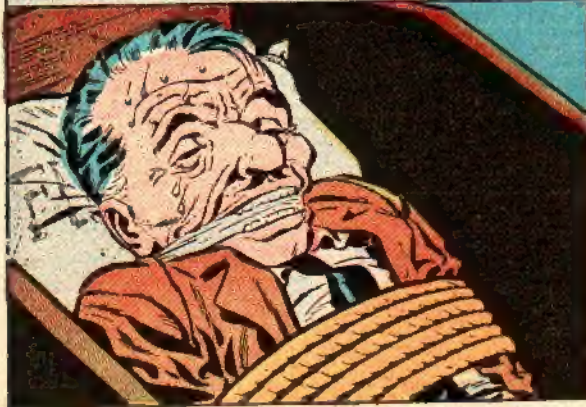
IN HORROR, HE FELT THEM LIFT HIM FROM THE BED AND CARRY HIM FROM THE BUILDING. QUIETLY THEY MOVED ACROSS THE COBBLESTONE COURTYARD, IN THE SHADOWS, PAST OTHER BUILDINGS...



THEY REACHED THEIR DESTINATION...THE CARPENTRY SHOP! AS HE WAS CARRIED INSIDE, HE SENSED A MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE AND HE CRANED HIS NECK THIS WAY AND THAT, THE BETTER TO SEE! IN THE DIM LIGHT, HIS EYES FELL UPON...AN OPEN COFFIN!



A SOUND GURGLD IN HIS THROAT! HE TRIED TO GET FREE...HE SQUIRMED AND TWISTED BUT HE WAS LIFTED AND THEN PLACED IN THE COFFIN! HIS BODY GAVE AN INVOLUNTARY SHUDDER OF REVULSION AND TEARS ROLLED FREELY FROM HIS EYES...



HE HEARD THE SHUFFLING OF MANY FEET, THE WHISPER OF CLOTH RUSTLING AGAINST CLOTH, AND THE SOFT SOBS OF SORROW. *WAS THIS A GAME?* WHAT WERE THEY GOING TO *DO* TO HIM!? SUDDENLY, FROM ALL SIDES, THE MOURNERS LOOMED INTO VIEW...



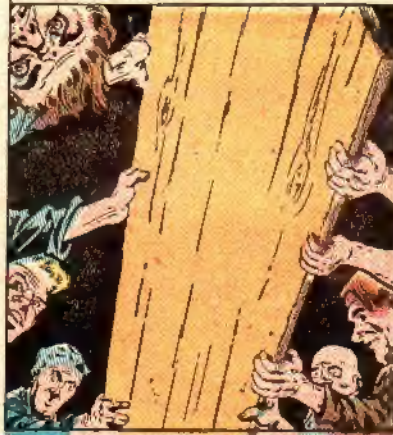
IN HIS MIND'S EYE, VISIONS OF THE FUNERAL HE HAD WITNESSED ONLY A FEW HOURS BEFORE FLASHED BY! HE TREMBLED AT THE THOUGHT OF IT! THE COFFIN LID DESCENDED...



IN THE EBONY BLACKNESS, HE CRIED OUT SILENTLY IN TERROR! WOULD THEY LET HIM SUFFOCATE? HE LISTENED...AND HEARD WAILS OF PROTEST! *WHAT WAS WRONG?*



HE HEARD THE INMATES CONVERSING IN LOW TONES. THEN, SUDDENLY, THE LID WAS REMOVED! WERE THEY GOING TO FREE HIM?



SURELY THEY COULD ONLY BE *PLAYING A GAME!* THERE WAS AN EXPECTANT QUIET, BROKEN ONLY BY THE SOUND OF SAWING WOOD! A FACE SUDDENLY LEERED INTO THE COFFIN AND JUST AS SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED! AND THEN THE COFFIN-LID WAS OVERHEAD! *THEY WERE PUTTING IT BACK ON!*



THE OODHS AND AAAHNS THAT FOLLOWED WERE ALL APPRECIATIVE! AND NO WONDER! THE LID NOW HAD A *WINDOW* THROUGH WHICH HE COULD RECEIVE AIR! OR WAS IT PUT THERE SO THE INMATES COULD *SEE* HIM BETTER? HE DIDN'T KNOW!



FACES APPEARED FROM ALL ANGLES! HAPPY FACES, SAD FACES, CURIOUS FACES, WORRIED FACES! DIFFERENT FACES, DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS...YET EACH ONE THE SAME AS ALL THE OTHERS!



A HAND REACHED THROUGH THE OPENING AND FELT OF HIS CHEEK! HARTLEY QUIMB CLOSED HIS EYES, BUT EVEN THEN HE HEARD THE PEOPLE BRUSHING AGAINST THE OUTSIDE OF THE COFFIN, SENSED THEIR HORRID HEADS FRAMED IN THE OPENING! A HAND PINCHED HIS NOSE!



HE HAD LOST ALL TRACK OF TIME. HE LAY THERE, MOTIONLESS, WHILE THE MOURNING INMATES SLOWLY FILED BY, PAYING THEIR 'LAST RESPECTS'. EACH TIME HE OPENED HIS EYES, A DIFFERENT FACE WAS PEERING INTO HIS! HE TRIED TO PRAY, BUT HE COULDN'T REMEMBER THE WORDS...



FINALLY HE FELT THE COFFIN BEING LIFTED! WOULD THEY RETURN HIM TO HIS ROOM NOW? THEY HADN'T REALLY TRIED TO *HURT* HIM... THEY WERE MERELY PLAYING! *LITTLE CHILDREN*, THAT WAS ALL...

THE CEILING WAS MUCH CLOSER NOW. OBVIOUSLY, THE COFFIN WAS BEING CARRIED ON THEIR SHOULDERS! THE CEILING MOVED BY ABOVE HIM AND SOON HE WAS PASSED THROUGH THE DOORWAY INTO THE NIGHT...

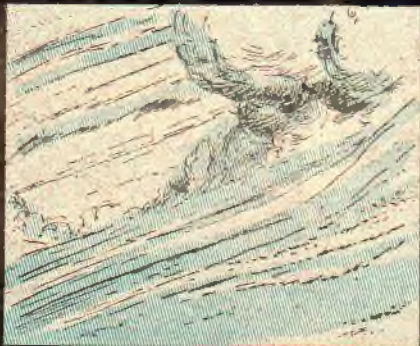


SAVE FOR A FEW CLOUDS, THE SKY WAS CLEAR. STARS TWINKLED BRIGHTLY, UNCONCERNED WITH THE EERIE PAGEANT THAT WAS TAKING PLACE BELOW THEM. HE LISTENED TO THE SHUFFLING STEPS OF THE PROCESSION ON THE COBBLESTONES...

THEY WERE JUST LITTLE CHILDREN... JUST *PLAYING A GAME!* THEY WERE PROBABLY BRINGING HIM BACK TO HIS ROOM. HE SAW THE TOP OF A YARD BUILDING PASS SLOWLY BY ABOVE HIM. WASN'T THAT *HIS* BUILDING ??? IT DISAPPEARED FROM VIEW.



AGAIN THERE WAS NOTHING BUT THE STAR-FILLED SKY ABOVE HIM. THAT **COULDN'T** HAVE BEEN THE BUILDING WHERE HIS ROOM WAS! HE LOOKED AGAIN AT THE SKY. CLOUDS WERE FORMING! STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT... HE COULDN'T REMEMBER THE REST...



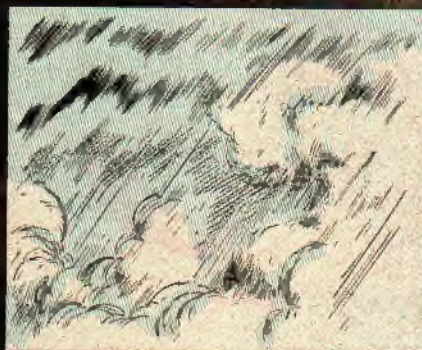
A TREE PASSED BY OVERHEAD, ITS LEAVES WHISPERING IN THE WIND, ITS BRANCHES WAVING GOOD-BYE AS IT PASSED FROM HIS SIGHT! **WHERE WERE THEY TAKING HIM?** HE HAD LOST ALL SENSE OF DIRECTION. THEY WERE JUST CHILDREN... LITTLE CHILDREN... JUST LITTLE CHILDREN **WHO HAD KILLED HIS PREDECESSOR...**



THEY PASSED BENEATH A WROUGHT-IRON ARCHWAY... A GATE! AGAINST THE DARKENING SKY, HE TRIED TO SPELL THE LETTERS HE SAW. HE HAD TO READ THEM BACKWARDS... **C...E...M...**



HARTLEY QUMB'S HEART POUNDED TILL HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BURST THROUGH HIS CHEST! WERE THEY REALLY **SERIOUS?** HAD THEY FORGOTTEN HE WASN'T A **REAL CORPSE?** THEY WOULDN'T **BURY HIM ALIVE...** WOULD THEY?



HE FELT HIMSELF BEING LOWERED TO THE GROUND. A MOMENT LATER HE HEARD THE UNMISTAKEABLE SOUND OF SHOVELS DIGGING INTO THE RAIN-SOAKED EARTH! THE REALIZATION UNDERMINED HIS LAST VESTIGE OF SELF-CONTROL... AND HE FAINTED...



HARTLEY QUMB OPENED HIS EYES AND SAT UP IN BED! DROPS OF RAIN FROM A LEAK IN THE SKYLIGHT HIT HIS FACE. HE UNTANGLED HIS LEGS FROM THE MASS OF TWISTED SHEETS, PULLED THE CHOKING BED CLOTHES FROM HIS MOUTH AND HEAVED A SIGH...



HE WIPED THE PERSPIRATION FROM HIS HEAD AND GAVE FERVENT THANKS THAT IT HAD ONLY BEEN A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE! HE LAY BACK ON THE PILLOW... RELAXED...



HARTLEY QUIMB SMILED SOFTLY, EVERY FIBER OF HIS BEING TINGLING WITH RELIEF. HE LOOKED UP THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT AT THE WINKING STARS, AND IMAGINED *THEM* TO BE RELIEVED FOR HIM, TOO...



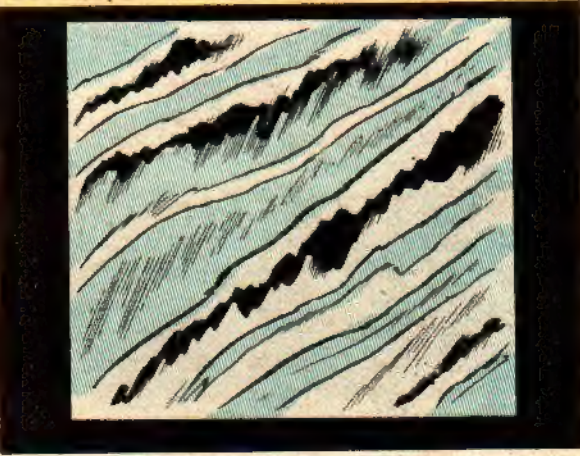
HE RECITED THE POEM... STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT... AND THIS TIME HE *KNEW* ALL THE WORDS! HE CLOSED HIS EYES MOMENTARILY AND MADE A WISH...



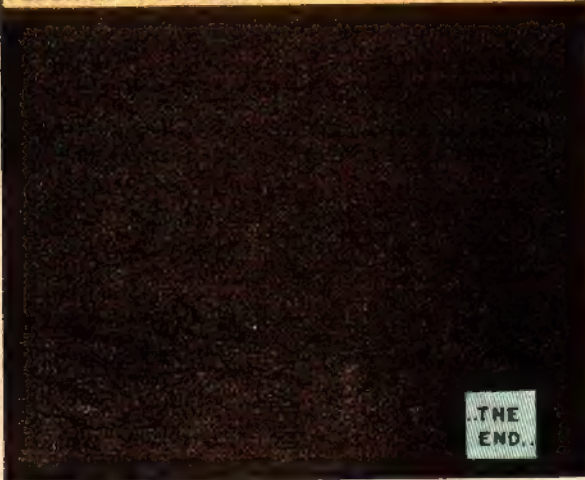
...AND WHEN HE OPENED HIS EYES AGAIN... A FACE WAS GRINNING DOWN AT HIM...



STARTLED, HARTLEY QUIMB TRIED TO LEAP UP, BUT FOUND HE COULD NOT MOVE! HE TRIED TO YELL, TO SCREAM, BUT COULDN'T! THE FACE DISAPPEARED...



...AND THEN A SHOVELFUL OF DIRT HIT HIM FLUSH IN THE FACE...



THE
END..

TCH, TCH... AIN'T THAT A DIRTY SHAME? JUST IN CASE SOME OF YOU CHARACTERS ARE A WEE BIT CONFUSED, HERE'S THE LOW-DOWN! HARTLEY WAS IN THE COFFIN ALL THE TIME! HE ONLY DREAMED HE WOKE UP IN HIS ROOM! ACTUALLY, INMATES, WHEN HE FAINTED FOR A FEW MOMENTS, HE SUBCONSCIOUSLY DREAMED THAT... ER... WAIT A MINUTE! WHEN HE WAS IN... NO... ER... HE DREAMED HE WAS AWAKE, WHEN... NO, THAT'S NOT... OH, THE DEVIL WITH IT!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! SO VACATION TIME IS OVER...EH, KIDDIES? WELL, LET'S REMINISCE! I'LL TELL YOU A VACATION YARN THAT WILL TICKLE YOUR CRAWLY SPINE. WELCOME TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR, THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER, GUEST-SPOTTING IN V.K.'S MORBID MUCK-MAG WITH THE YELP-YARN I CALL...

WHILE THE CAT'S AWAY...



JOHN YOUNGER AND HIS PARTNER, FRANK WESTON, HAD BEEN WORKING THEIR LITTLE RACKET SUCCESSFULLY FOR ALMOST A YEAR. THEY'D OPENED A SMALL TRAVEL AGENCY DOWNTOWN, LINED THE WALLS WITH ATTRACTIVE POSTERS OF ROMANTIC FAR-AWAY SPOTS, AND PROCEEDED TO FLEECE THEIR CUSTOMERS IN THE FOLLOWING FASHION. TAKE THE CASE OF MIRANDA CRUMM, A RICH OLD WIDOW. SHE'D COME TO THE Y & W TRAVEL BUREAU TO ARRANGE HER VACATION.

OH, YES, MISS CRUMM. BERMUDA IS LOVELY THIS TIME OF YEAR. WE'LL BE GLAD TO MAKE ALL THE NECESSARY RESERVATIONS FOR YOU...

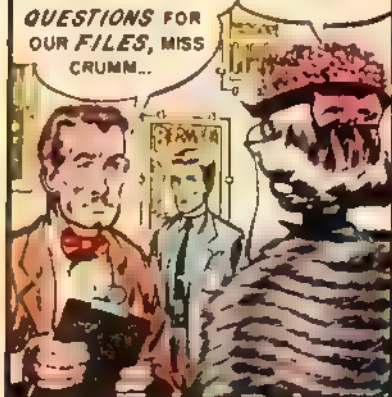
THANK YOU, MR. YOUNGER. THAT WILL BE FOR TWO WEEKS, STARTING THE TWELFTH



AS OPERATORS OF A TRAVEL BUREAU IT WAS *EASY* FOR MR. YOUNGER AND MR. WESTON TO EXTRACT THE NECESSARY *INFORMATION* FROM THEIR CUSTOMERS...

AND NOW, IF YOU'LL ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS FOR OUR FILES, MISS CRUMM...

OF COURSE, MR. WESTON...



NATURALLY, NONE OF THEIR CUSTOMERS EVER SUSPECTED THE *REAL* REASON FOR THE VERY *PERSONAL* QUESTIONS THEY WERE ASKED...

LET'S SEE... YOUR NAME IS *MIRANDA CRUMM*... YOU LIVE AT *250 BEECH STREET*. ER... DO YOU LIVE *ALONE*, MRS. CRUMM?

ALL ALONE, MR. WESTON.



AFTER THEY'D LEARNED *EVERYTHING* ABOUT THEIR PROSPECTIVE VACATIONER THAT THEY *NEEDED*, THEY WOULD PROCEED *NORMALLY*...

WE WILL HAVE YOUR *STEAMSHIP TICKETS* AND *HOTEL RESERVATIONS* FOR YOU BY *TOMORROW*, MISS CRUMM. THANK YOU FOR *ALLOWING* US TO *SERVE* YOU!

YOU HAVE BEEN MOST *KIND*, MR. YOUNGER.



...AND THE HAPPY CUSTOMER WOULD SOON BE OFF ON THE VACATION THAT THE *Y & W* AGENCY HAD HELPFULLY PLANNED FOR HER. BUT A NIGHT OR TWO LATER...

THIS IS IT! *250 BEECH*...

PARK HALF-WAY DOWN THE BLOCK. WE DON'T WANT TO ATTRACT ATTENTION.



YES, KIDDIES. ARMED WITH THE FACT THAT *MIRANDA CRUMM* WAS SOMEWHERE ON THE HIGH SEAS, BOUND FOR *BERMUDA* — THAT IF SHE COULD AFFORD SUCH A VACATION, SHE WAS OBVIOUSLY WELL-TO-DO — AND THAT, SINCE SHE LIVED ALONE, HER HOUSE WAS NOW EMPTY, *JOHN YOUNGER* AND *FRANK WESTON* LET THEMSELVES IN.



HOW YOU COMIN'?

HAVE IT *OPEN* IN A *JIFFY*.

...AND, UNDISTURBED, THEY RELIEVED THEIR TRAVELING CUSTOMER'S HOUSE OF ITS VALUABLES...

GET A LOAD OF THIS *MINK*! WE'LL GET *TWO GRAND* FOR THIS, AT *LEAST*...

THIS COLLECTION OF *SILVER* IS WORTH A *FORTUNE*.



OF COURSE, POOR MISS CRUMM, WHEN SHE RETURNED FROM HER SOJURN, QUICKLY LOST HER ACQUIRED SUNTAN WHEN SHE SAW THAT HER HOUSE HAD BEEN RANSACKED...



HEH, HEH! NICE LITTLE RACKET, EH, FIENDS? WHAT BETTER WAY COULD THERE BE OF FINDING A PROSPECTIVE HOUSE TO ROB THAN BY LEARNING THAT THE RICH OCCUPANTS WERE GOING AWAY ON A VACATION? AND WHAT BETTER WAY OF LEARNING IT THAN BY ARRANGING THE WHOLE TRIP YOURSELF? SO NOW YOU KNOW FRANKIE AND JOHNNY'S LITTLE RACKET. NOW READ ON AND SEE WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM...

ONE DAY, JOHN YOUNGER GOT A STRANGE PHONE CALL...

IS THIS THE Y & W TRAVEL AGENCY?

THAT'S RIGHT. THIS IS MR. YOUNGER SPEAKING.

I'D LIKE YOU TO ARRANGE A TWO WEEK VACATION FOR ME, MR. YOUNGER. I'VE BEEN WORKING VERY HARD LATELY, AND...

DO YOU HAVE ANY PARTICULAR PLACE IN MIND, SIR?

I'M THINKING OF FLYING TO EQUADOR. DO YOU THINK YOU COULD GET ME PLANE RESERVATIONS...SAY... FOR THE TWENTIETH?

OF COURSE, SIR! IN WHOSE NAME DO I MAKE THE RESERVATIONS?

ER...MY NAME IS T. CHARLES KINGMAN!

AND WHERE DO YOU LIVE, MR. KINGMAN?

I LIVE AT 711 WOODS ROAD...

711... WOODS... ROAD. FINE. AND NOW, IF YOU'LL ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS, MR. KINGMAN...FOR OUR FILES...

DO YOU LIVE ALONE, MR. KINGMAN?

THERE IS NO ONE LIVING IN MY PLACE WITH ME, MR. YOUNGER, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN...

ALL RIGHT, MR. KINGMAN. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING. ER... WILL YOU PICK UP YOUR RESERVATIONS HERE?

NO, MR YOUNGER. YOU'D BETTER MAIL THEM TO ME. JUST TELL ME HOW MUCH THEY'LL BE AND I'LL SEND YOU THE MONEY...

AFTER MR. YOUNGER HAD COMPLETED THE ARRANGEMENTS WITH MR. KINGMAN, HE HUNG UP AND TURNED TO HIS PARTNER...

711 WOODS ROAD! THAT'S OUT IN THE SUBURBS, ISN'T IT, FRANK?

YEAH! BIG ESTATES OUT THERE! WHY?

WHAT LUCK! SOME OLD GUY JUST CALLED... WANTS US TO ARRANGE FOR A PLANE TRIP TO EQUADOR FOR HIM. HE MUST BE LOADED! AND HE SAID THERE WAS NO ONE LIVING WITH HIM, TOO!

ANOTHER SUCKER! GREAT! LET'S GET BUSY AND GET THOSE RESERVATIONS. AFTER HE'S GONE, WE'LL GO OUT TO HIS PLACE AND CLEAN IT OUT...

THE TICKETS WERE OBTAINED AND MAILED OUT TO MR. KINGMAN. THEN, ON THE TWENTIETH, MR. YOUNGER CALLED THE AIRLINE...

THIS IS THE Y&W TRAVEL AGENCY. WE JUST WANT TO CHECK, DID A MR. T. CHARLES KINGMAN TAKE OFF ON FLIGHT 12 TO EQUADOR?

JUST A MOMENT. I'LL SEE, YES! MR. KINGMAN WAS ABOARD...

HE HUNG UP, GRINNING...

HE'S GONE! THE COAST IS CLEAR.

WE'LL TAKE THE STATION WAGON TONIGHT, FRANK. THIS PROMISES TO BE A BIG HAUL.

THAT NIGHT, YOUNGER AND WESTON DROVE OUT INTO THE COUNTRY...

WOODS ROAD! THIS IS IT! TURN IN...

SURE IS LONELY OUT HERE AT NIGHT...

THEIR STATION WAGON BOUNCED AND WEAVED DOWN A DISMAL THREE-LINED ROTTED ROAD...

SOME ESTATE!

TAKE IT EASY! SOME OF THESE PLACES ARE A LITTLE RUN DOWN, BUT THE OLD FAMILY HEIR-LOOMS ARE PRICELESS! KEEP GOING!

FINALLY THE ROAD ENDED, AND THE STATION WAGON'S HEADLIGHTS FELL UPON AN OLD, TIME-WORN, PAINT-PEELED ROTTED MANSION...

THE GUY CONNED US. WHO WOULD LIVE IN THAT RAT-TRAP!

LET'S TAKE A LOOK...JUST TO MAKE SURE!

THEY STEPPED FROM THEIR STATION-WAGON AND CROSSED THE WILDLY OVERGROWN LAWN. FRANK'S FLASH-LIGHT FELL UPON THE FADED SIGN...

WHAT'S IT SAY?

'BEWARE! TRESPASSERS WILL BE PERSECUTED! HAH! THAT'S A LAUGH!



THEY CLIMBED THE ROTTED STAIRS THAT CREAKED UNDER THEIR WEIGHT AND STOOD UPON THE COLUMNED PORCH BEFORE THE MASSIVE DECAYED DOOR.

HEY, FRANK! THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS! THERE'S NO ONE LIVING HERE! G'MON! LET'S GO...

HOLD IT! THE DOOR'S UNLOCKED...



THE OLD DOOR SQUEALED OPEN ON RUSTED HINGES...

NOT A STICK OF FURNITURE! NOTHING! NOTHING BUT A WILD GOOSE CHASE!

@@!#!#!



THE TWO MEN WENT FROM ROOM TO ROOM THROUGH THE ONCE PROUD MANSION, NOW DUST LADEN AND COB-WEBBED WITH TIME...

DESERTED! NO ONE'S LIVED HERE FOR YEARS...

THIS DOOR LEADS TO THE CELLAR. WE'LL TAKE A LOOK, AND THEN LEAVE...



THEY DESCENDED THE WINDING STONE STEPS INTO THE DAMP CELLAR.

FRANK! WHAT'S THAT?

A METAL DOOR! PADLOCKED! AND THERE'S A SIGN ON IT...



THEY READ THE FRESHLY PAINTED SIGN

HE... HE DOES LIVE HERE! LOOK!

GONE AWAY ON VACATION. WILL BE BACK IN TWO WEEKS. WARNING KEEP OUT

T.C.K.

T.C.K. T. CHARLES KINGMAN!



THE TWO MEN LOOKED AT EACH OTHER

HE MUST BE ONE OF THOSE RICH OLD ECCENTRICS. I'LL BET HE'S GOT A FORTUNE HIDDEN IN THERE...

STAND BACK! I'M GOING TO SMASH THE LOCK...



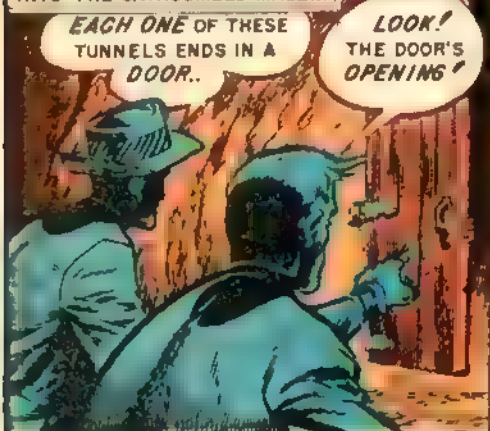
THE DANK OLD CELLAR REVERBERATED WITH THE SOUND OF THE PADLOCK SPLITTING OPEN UNDER YOUNGER'S ANGRY ASSAULT. THE HUGE METAL DOOR SWUNG WIDE.



THE TWO MEN MOVED THROUGH THE LIBRARY INTO THE CAVERN-LIKE PASSAGE BEYOND...



TUNNELS SNAKED OFF IN ALL DIRECTIONS. THE TWO MEN WANDERED DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE CATACOMBED MAZE...



AS THE DOOR AT THE END OF ONE OF THE TUNNELS SWUNG OPEN, YOUNGER AND WESTON SCREAMED...



THEY RAN WILDLY BACK THROUGH THE NETWORK OF TUNNELS...



EVERY TIME THEY CAME TO A DEAD-END, A DOOR SWUNG WIDE.



HOURS PASSED AND YOUNGER AND WESTON REALIZED THAT THEY WERE HOPELESSLY LOST IN THE MAZE OF UNDERGROUND PASSAGeways, HOUNDED BY THE THINGS THAT SPUNG FROM EACH TUNNEL-END DOOR AS THEY CAME UPON IT...

WEREWOLVES! EEEEEEE!



DAYS PASSED. THE TWO MEN COWERED IN THE DARKNESS, TOO FRIGHTENED TO MOVE, WATCHING THE CREATURES PASS NEARBY, SEARCHING FOR THEM...

CHOKES...
MUMMIES!

I I...
I'M HUNGRY!



IT WAS ALMOST TWO WEEKS LATER... TWO WEEKS OF SHEER HORROR. TRAPPED IN THE NETWORK OF TUNNELS, STAYING ALIVE BY CATCHING BATS AND EATING THEM RAW... THAT JOHN YOUNGER AND FRANK WESTON CRAWLED INTO THE BOOK-LINED LIBRARY ONCE MORE.

GASP GASP WE'RE FREE, JOHNNY...
GASP... FREE! THERE'S THE METAL DOOR.

I... I CAN HARDLY CRAWL.



...UP THE DAMP, STONE CELLAR STEPS.

JUST A LITTLE... EH...EH...
LITTLE WAYS MORE...EH. EH.

GASP
GASP



...AND OUT INTO THE COOL NIGHT AIR OUT ONTO THE PORCH...

EH EH

EH EH



...OUT INTO THE MOONLIGHT THAT GLISTENED ON THEIR FRIGHT-WHITENED HAIR. AND AS THEY CRAWLED PAST THE OLD MAN WITH THE VALISES IN HIS HAND, WHO'D JUST RETURNED FROM HIS VACATION...

EH...EH...

EH...EH



THEY NEVER EVEN LOOKED UP AT ME! SO, THERE THEY GO, AFTER SPENDING TWO WEEKS IN THE CRYPT OF TERROR! YEP! THAT WAS ME... THE CRYPT-KEEPER... T.C.K., USING AN ALIAS OF COURSE, WHO CALLED THE Y&W TRAVEL BUREAU. S'MATTER? I CAN'T GO ON A VACATION, TOO! BUT, WHY EQUADOR, YOU ASK? WELL, I WENT DOWN TO VISIT THE JIVARO TRIBE. TO BRUSH UP ON THE LATEST METHODS OF SHRINKING HUMAN HEADS! DROP IN SOME TIME I'LL GIVE YOU A SMALL IDEA OF WHAT I'VE LEARNED NOW. I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO V.K. 'BYE'

- THE END -

**WE AT E.C. ARE PROUDEST
OF OUR SCIENCE-FICTION
MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...**



**LOOK FOR
THESE SEALS
WHEN YOU BUY!**

**THEY ARE YOUR ASSURANCE OF TOP
ENTERTAINMENT... FOUND ONLY ON
THE FOLLOWING E.C. MAGAZINES:**

TALES FROM THE CRYPT
HAUNT OF FEAR - VAULT OF HORROR
SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES
CRIME SUSPENSTORIES
TWO-FISTED TALES - FRONTLINE COMBAT
MAD
WEIRD SCIENCE - WEIRD FANTASY
AND THE 25¢ ANNUAL ANTHOLOGIES
WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY
TWO-FISTED ANNUAL - TALES OF TERROR

SUDDEN DEATH!

He slipped the gun into his pocket; the metal felt hot against his thigh. Then Curt Benbow peered at the body sprawled at his feet. The cellar was almost pitch-dark; he could barely make out the outflung arms and the gaping chest wound darkening the shirt of the man he had just killed.

Benbow walked quickly across the uneven cement floor, to the axe he had hidden. He picked it up, hefted it for a moment, then strode back to the spot where the body lay. Glancing up, he located the cross-beams stretching darkly across the ceiling. An old-fashioned cellar like this was perfect for Benbow's scheme. He'd hack through those ancient beams until the ceiling started to sag, then make his getaway. In minutes the supports would crack... the ceiling would come crashing down upon the dead man, making it appear that the victim had been killed by the sudden collapse of the supporting beams.

With a crunching sound, the axe bit into the dry wood. Again and again the metal flashed. Benbow could see the rafters beginning to crack, the heavy plaster sagging perceptibly. Perspiring from exertion, Benbow stopped to catch his breath. A few more swings of the axe would do it. Spitting on his palms, to ease the sting of the blisters on his skin, Benbow started swinging again.

The cross-beam suddenly broke, with no warning. And before he could

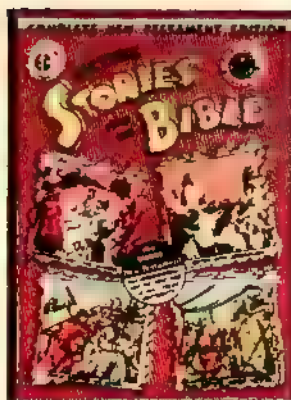
dodge out of the way, Benbow felt himself being buried under the cascading weight. He went down, managed somehow to turn over on his back... then the great blackened beams came crashing over him.

When he came to, his face was covered with plaster-dust. He blinked and tried to move. With a gasp of horror, Benbow realized he had no feeling in his arms or legs. Several huge chunks of wood rested across his body, almost completely covering him. He moaned... the sudden collapse of the ceiling had pinned him here to the murky cellar floor, as incapable of motion as a paralyzed insect on a biologist's slide!

Benbow caught his breath. In the dark he saw eyes glittering at him. Ten eyes... maybe a dozen. And they were coming closer, scuttling across the floor. With a spasm of terror, Benbow realized the place was full of rats!

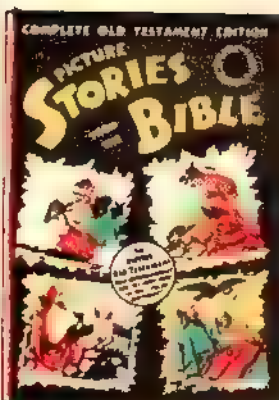
Now they were running over his immobilized feet, held there so motionless by the ponderous weight of the fallen beams. With a scream of agony that reverberated grotesquely through the old basement, Benbow felt a shattering explosion of pain... heard the ghoulish gnashing of teeth tearing at his exposed flesh. He tried to thrash about, to free himself from this hideous torture... but Benbow knew he was trapped. The rats were already chewing ravenously at his ankles, chomping at his meat and tearing it loose in great raw strips.

Benbow prayed for sudden death, hoping that his heart would stop beating before the savage rats completed their grisly task. Before they had completely ripped Benbow's feet from his body with their hideous razor-sharp fangs!



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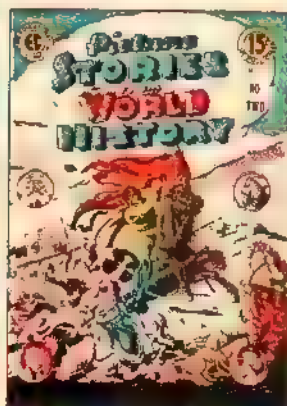


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THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER

JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB! There ... I said it!
O.K.? Now stop twisting my arm and lemme go on with
my column!

Greetings, ghouls. Here, to start the brawl rolling,
are the latest additions to our HORROR HIT PARADE

HACK UP YOUR BROTHERS IN YOUR OLD
KIT BAG
COME JOSEPHINE, TRY MY NEW GUILLOTINE
SQUIRMIN' THROUGH THE VERMIN
DON'T MAIM ME
I'M GONNA WASH THAT BLOOD RIGHT OUTTA
MY LAIR
THEY'VE GOT AN AWFUL LOT OF COFFINS
IN BRAZIL
BUTCHER ME
COMIN' THROUGH THE LYE
THE SCAR-MANGLED ANNA
I LOATHE YOU AS I NEVER LOATHED BEFORE
WILD HEARSE
SEVEN LONELY GRAVES

The above terror-tune titles were submitted by:
Eddie Turner at Baldwin City, Kansas Joe Mulkey II
of Detroit, Mich., Michael Page of Springvale, Maine,
and Ronnie Bourgeois and Albery Carey of New
Orleans, La.

Anthony Piazza of Monterey, Calif. suggests the
following VAMPIRE VOCALISTS

BURY COMO
THE CHILLS BROS
FRANKIE PAIN
BONEY BENNETT
NAT KING" GHOUL
VIC THE MOAN



Our PUTRID PROVERBS department inspired the fol-
lowing one-track-mind gems.

A ROLLING HEAD GATHERS NO MOTHS

Milo Thompson
Great Falls, Mont

A ROLLING GHOUL GATHERS NO VAMPIRES

Tim Smith
Houston, Texas

A WALKING CORPSE GATHERS NO MAGGOTS

Michael Reynolds
Somerset Pa

And now for some poems by y-y Y Y E E E O O
U-U-W! THE THIRD ANNUAL TALES OF TERROR
E.C.'s HORROR ANTHOLOGY 128 PAGES OF
CHILLS REPRINTS FROM 1952. STILL AVAIL-
ABLE 25c. YOUR NAME, YOUR ADDRESS NOW
LEGGO, AWREADY!

Er, as I was saying, some PERVERTED POETRY

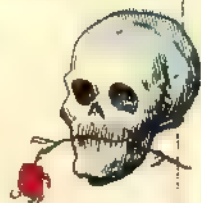
I Want a Ghoul
Just Like the Ghoul
That Buried Dear Old Dad
She Was a Fool
And the Only Ghoul



That Daddy Ever Had
A Real Old-fashioned Ghoul
With Long Sharp Claws,
Had a Scalp
But She Was After Paw's.
I Want a Ghoul
Just Like the Ghoul
That Buried Dear Old Dad

Nelson Bradwell
Oklahoma City, Okla.

We've had friends
Who are no more
They lie beneath
Our cellar floor
We keep our friends
As you can see
We share their bones
With company
We dig them up
And on a slab
Share the best friends
We ever had



Bonnie Lee Warner
Brooklyn, N. Y.

One bright day in the middle of the night
Two dead boys got up to fight
Back to back, they faced each other
Pulled out knives and shot each other
A deaf policeman heard the noise
And came and killed those two dead boys!

Michael Grage
Buffalo, N. Y.

A little boy that was so cruel
Didn't know his father was a ghoul
His mother, a vampire ...
His sisters, mummies.
His brother, a werewolf, who ate raw tummies

Tony Cohen
Paterson, N. J.

Oh give me a grave
Where the ghosts, they all rave
Where the ghouls and the werewolves all play ...
Where there's a horrible reek
And a discouraging shriek
And the shrouds are happy all day

Larry and Ricky Lobl
Washington, D. C.

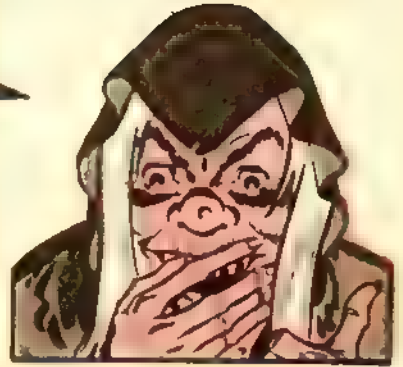
And now, in closin'-g-h-a-A-A-GH! JOIN THE
E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB! (Not that one stupid!-ed.)
THE THIRD ANNUAL TALES OF TERROR (Not that
one, stupid!-ed) SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE
(That one stupid!-ed) SO RELEASE YOUR HOLD
FROM MY JUGULAR VEIN AND I'LL TELL THEM
TO THIS OR ANY OTHER E.C. MAG 75c FOR SIX
ISSUES THE ADDRESS FOR SUBS OR TALES OF
TERROR ORDERS AS WELL AS FAN MAIL IS

The Vault-Keeper
Room 706, Dept 34
225 Lafayette Street
N. Y. C. 12, N. Y.

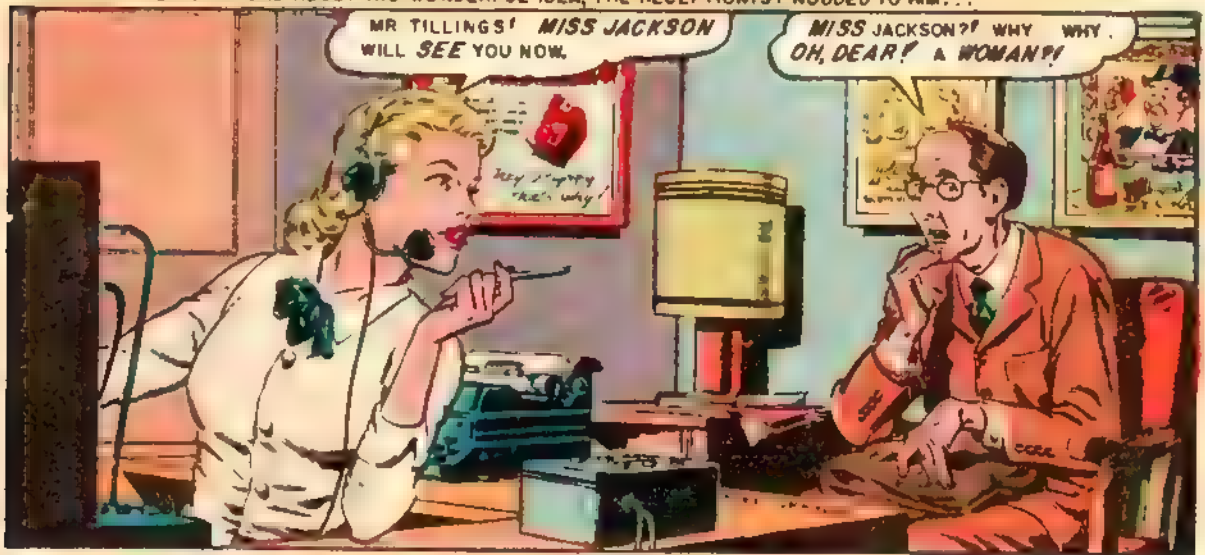
(TO JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB? SEE THE
INSIDE FRONT COVER!)

HERE'S A WARMING LITTLE
TERROR-TALE. I CALL IT...

SMOKE WRINGS



HUBERT TILLINGS, A SMALL MIDDLE-AGED BESPECTACLED MAN, SLIGHTLY BALDING, HAD WAITED UNEASILY IN THE RECEPTION ROOM OF THE BVD & O ADVERTISING AGENCY, CRADLING HIS SHABBY BRIEFCASE ON HIS LAP. FOR THREE LONG HOURS HE'D LOOKED UP EACH TIME THE RECEPTIONIST'S SWITCHBOARD HAD BUZZED, ONLY TO SEE HER SMILE AND SHAKE HER HEAD. FINALLY, TOWARD CLOSING TIME, WHEN HUBERT HAD JUST ABOUT GIVEN UP ALL HOPE OF SEEING ANYONE ABOUT HIS WONDERFUL IDEA, THE RECEPTIONIST NODDED TO HIM...

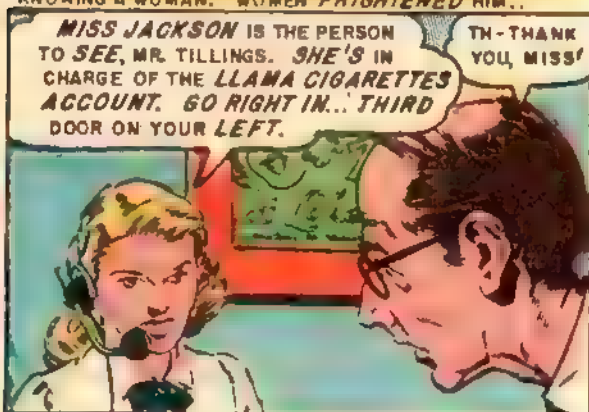


MR. TILLINGS! MISS JACKSON
WILL SEE YOU NOW.

MISS JACKSON?! WHY WHY
OH, DEAR! A WOMAN?!

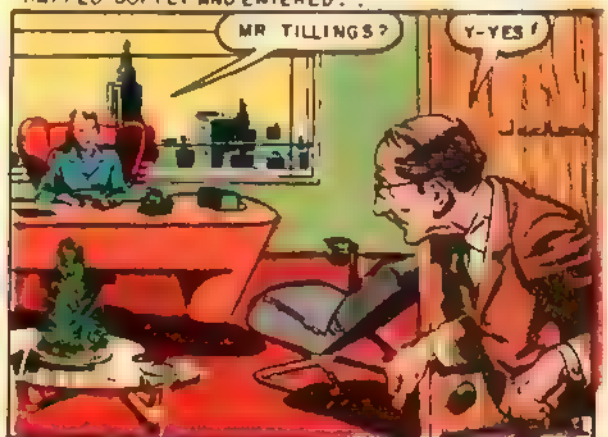
HUBERT TILLINGS WAS THE SHY, RETIRING, SELF-CONSCIOUS TYPE. HIS SLIGHT BUILD AND RELATIVELY UNATTRACTIVE FEATURES, TOGETHER WITH THIS SHYNESS, HAD FORCED HIM TO GO THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT EVER KNOWING A WOMAN. WOMEN FRIGHTENED HIM.

MR. TILLINGS MOVED SLOWLY DOWN THE HALL TO THE THIRD DOOR ON THE LEFT. GRIPPING HIS BRIEFCASE UNTIL THE KNUCKLES ON HIS HANDS TURNED WHITE, HE RAPPED SOFTLY AND ENTERED.



MISS JACKSON IS THE PERSON
TO SEE, MR. TILLINGS. SHE'S IN
CHARGE OF THE LLAMA CIGARETTES
ACCOUNT. GO RIGHT IN... THIRD
DOOR ON YOUR LEFT.

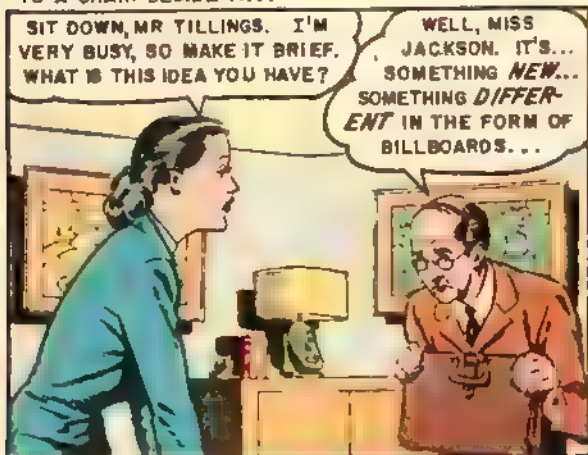
TH - THANK
YOU, MISS!



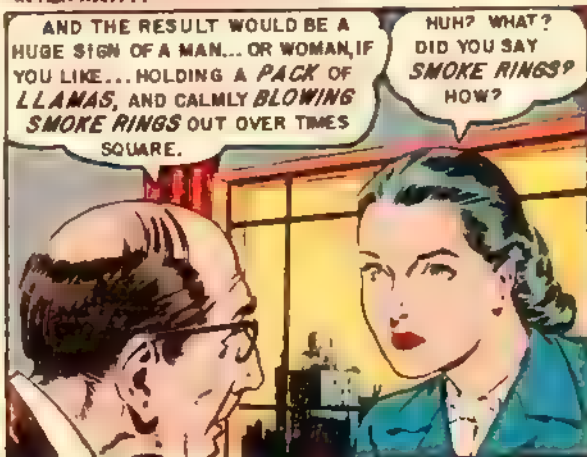
MR. TILLINGS?

Y-YES!

LORNA JACKSON WAS THE TYPICAL CAREER WOMAN TYPE... SMARTLY DRESSED... COLDLY ATTRACTIVE... BRISK AND BUSINESSLIKE. SHE STOOD BEHIND A METICULOUSLY NEAT DESK... MOTIONED MR TILLINGS TO A CHAIR BESIDE IT...



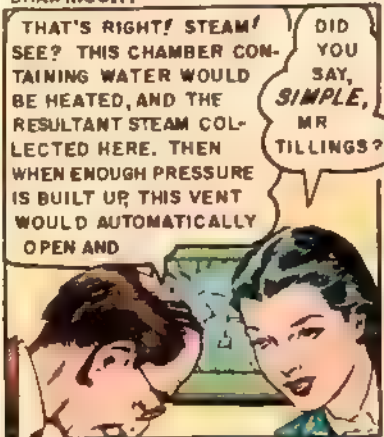
LORNA STUDIED MR. TILLINGS AS HE STAMMERED THROUGH THE SPEECH HE'D CAREFULLY REHEARSED. LORNA DISPISED MEN. *THEY* HAD ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES... ALL THE *HIGH POSITIONS*. MEN STOOD IN HER WAY...



MR. TILLINGS OPENED HIS BRIEFCASE AND SPREAD OUT A SHEAF OF SKETCHES ON MISS JACKSON'S DESK



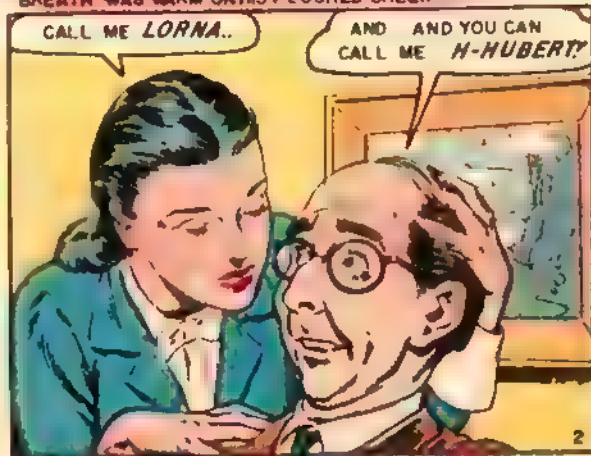
HUBERT POINTED TO HIS CRUDE DRAWINGS...



MISS JACKSON CAME AROUND FROM BEHIND HER DESK. SHE SMILED WARMLY, BENDING OVER BEFUZZLED MR. TILLINGS SO THAT HER HEAVY PERFUME BLANKETED HIM

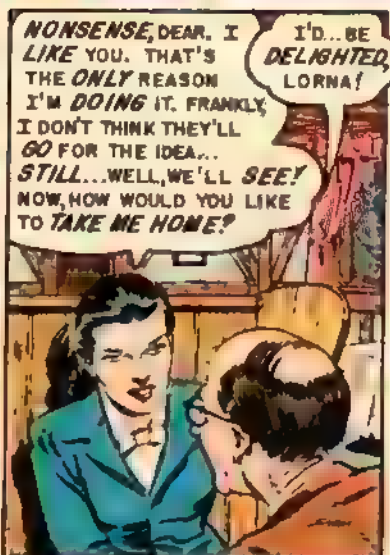
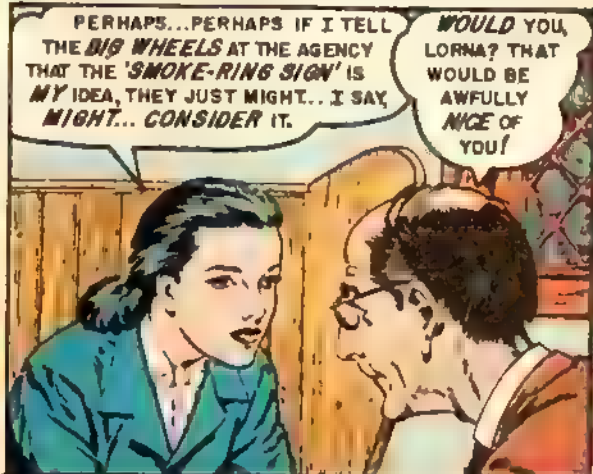
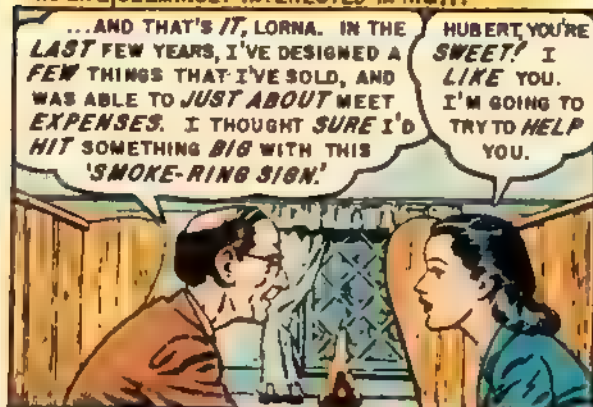


SHE RAN HER HAND SLOWLY OVER HIS BALDING HEAD, CATCHING HIS SPARSE HAIR BETWEEN HER FINGERS. HER BREATH WAS WARM ON HIS FLUSHED CHEEK



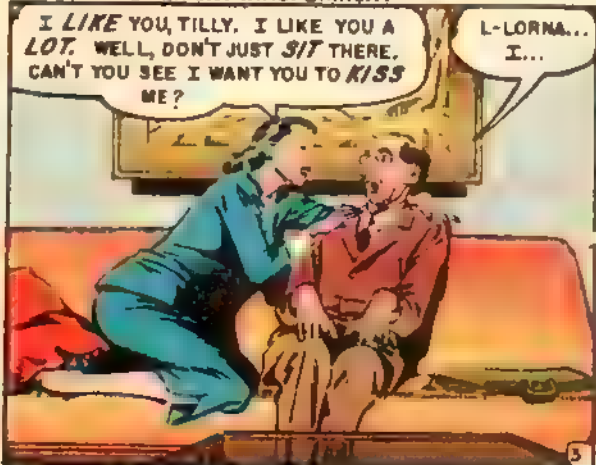
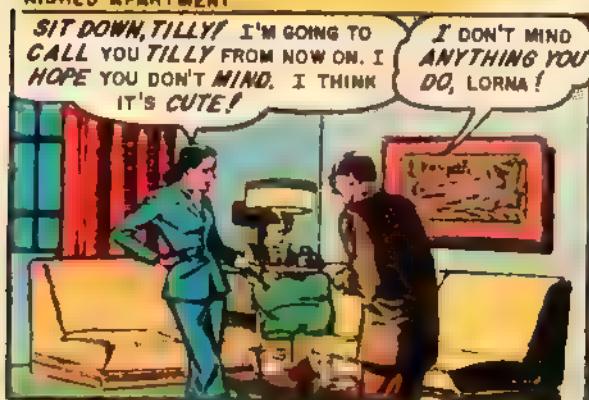
LORNA AND HUBERT HAD DINNER IN A ROMANTIC LITTLE RESTAURANT JUST DOWN THE BLOCK FROM THE R.V.D.'S OFFICES. ALL DURING THE MEAL, SHE CHATTED WITH HIM GAYLY, SUGGESTIVELY, ASKING HIM QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS LIFE, SEEMINGLY INTERESTED IN HIM...

LORNA'S HAND STOLE ACROSS THE TABLE... REACHING FOR HUBERT'S CARESSING IT...

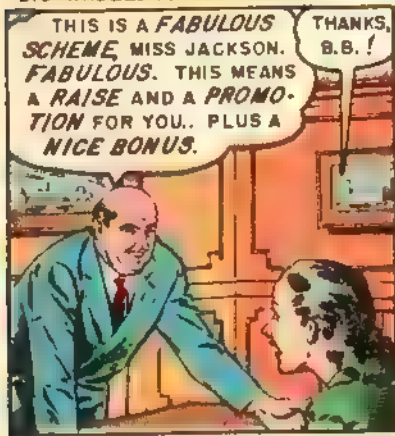


HUBERT HESITATED. HE FELT HIS HEART BEAT FASTER... HIS BLOOD RUSH TO HIS CHEEKS. WAS HE DREAMING? WAS ALL THIS REAL? HE? HUBERT TILLINGS? HE SLIPPED PAST LAURA INTO HER LUXURIOUSLY FURNISHED APARTMENT

LORNA KNELT ON THE HUGE SECTIONAL BESIDE HUBERT... PURSUING HER LIPS... WHISPERING...



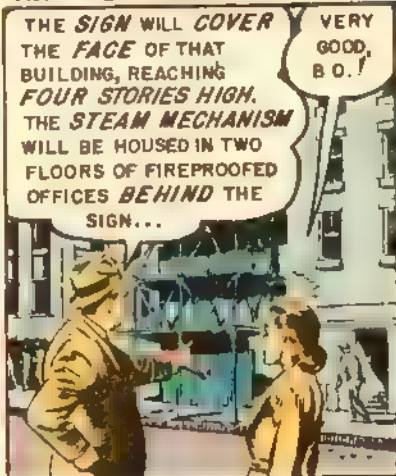
IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, LORNA SAW A GREAT DEAL OF HUBERT. SHE ALSO SAW A GREAT DEAL OF THE BIG-WHEELS IN THE AGENCY ..



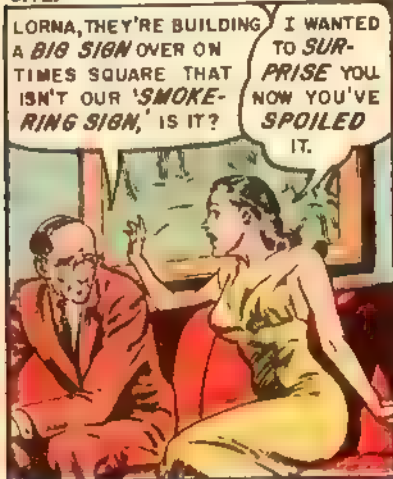
ON HER DATES WITH HUBERT, LORNA KEPT HIM POSTED ON WHAT WAS HAPPENING WITH HIS IDEA...



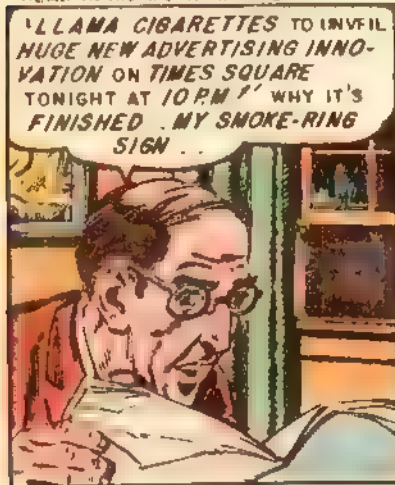
DURING THE DAY, LORNA WOULD VISIT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE...



AND AT NIGHT, THE **DESTRUCTION** SITE.



THEN, ONE DAY, HUBERT WOKE UP TO READ IN HIS MORNING PAPER



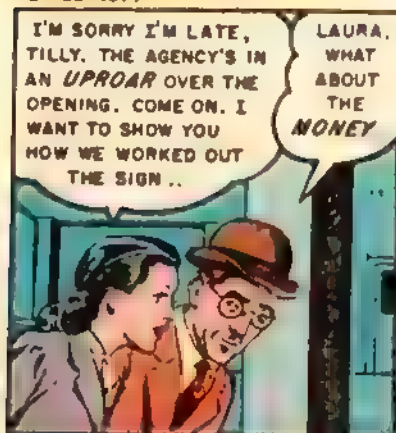
HASTILY HE PHONED LORNA...



THAT NIGHT, AT NINE SHARP, HUBERT WAITED BELOW THE DRAPED SIGN THAT LOOMED FOUR STORIES HIGH OVER TIMES SQUARE...



LORNA CAME AT ALMOST NINE-THIRTY. SHE TOOK HIS HAND AND LED HIM INTO THE DESERTED OFFICE BUILDING.



I'M SORRY I'M LATE, TILLY. THE AGENCY'S IN AN **UPROAR** OVER THE OPENING. COME ON. I WANT TO SHOW YOU HOW WE WORKED OUT THE SIGN..

LAURA. WHAT ABOUT THE **MONEY**

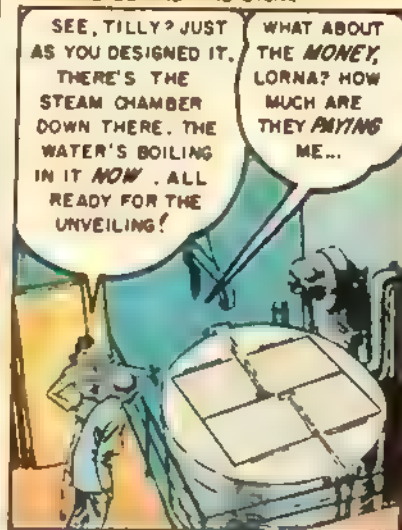
THEY WENT UP THE BACK STAIRS



I'LL TELL YOU **ALL** ABOUT IT, TILLY. FIRST, I WANT TO SHOW YOU THE STEAM MANUFACTURING UNIT.

I'M NOT **INTERESTED** IN THAT, LORNA. I WANT TO KNOW..

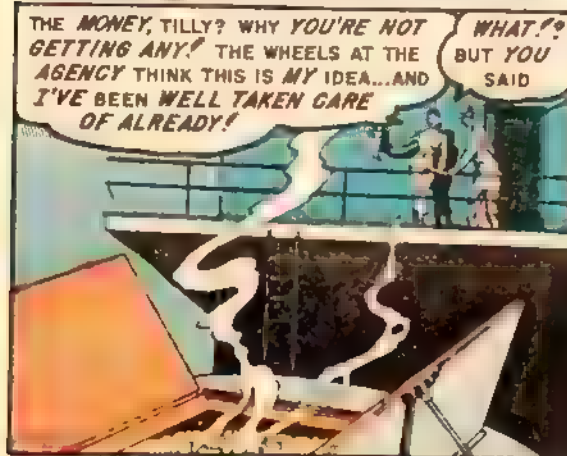
LORNA UNLOCKED THE FIRE-PROOFED DOOR TO THE DOUBLE-FLOORED OFFICE BEHIND THE SIGN..



SEE, TILLY? JUST AS YOU DESIGNED IT. THERE'S THE STEAM CHAMBER DOWN THERE. THE WATER'S BOILING IN IT **NOW**. ALL READY FOR THE UNVEILING?

WHAT ABOUT THE **MONEY**, LORNA? HOW MUCH ARE THEY **PAYING** ME...

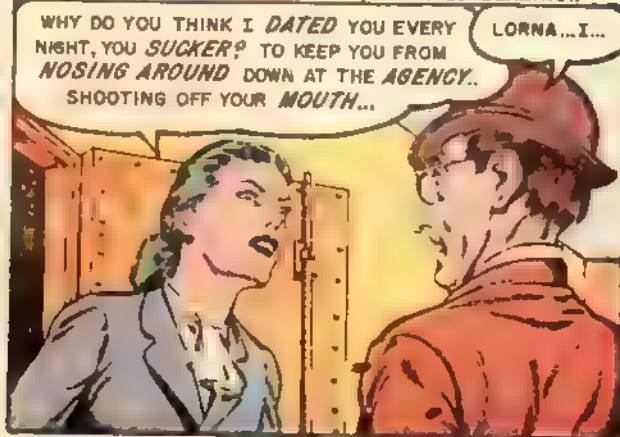
LORNA PRESSED A SWITCH. THE HUGE STEEL LID OF THE STEAM-KETTLE-LIKE CHAMBER SWUNG OPEN BELOW THEM



THE **MONEY**, TILLY? WHY YOU'RE NOT **GETTING ANY!** THE WHEELS AT THE AGENCY THINK THIS IS **MY** IDEA...AND I'VE BEEN WELL TAKEN CARE OF ALREADY!

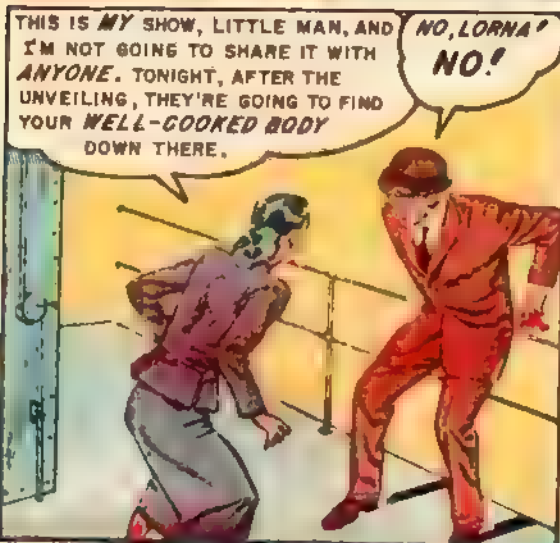
WHAT? BUT YOU SAID

LORNA MOVED TOWARD HUBERT, HER EYES BLAZING..



WHY DO YOU THINK I **DATED** YOU EVERY NIGHT, YOU **SUCKER?** TO KEEP YOU FROM **NOSING AROUND** DOWN AT THE AGENCY. SHOOTING OFF YOUR **MOUTH**...

LORNA...I...



THIS IS **MY** SHOW, LITTLE MAN, AND I'M NOT GOING TO SHARE IT WITH **ANYONE**. TONIGHT, AFTER THE UNVEILING, THEY'RE GOING TO FIND YOUR **WELL-COOKED BODY** DOWN THERE.

NO, LORNA! NO!

LORNA PUSHED HUBERT TILLYING FLAILED, THEN PLUNGED DOWNWARD, INTO THE OPEN STEAM CHAMBER FILLED WITH BUBBLING, SCALDING WATER..

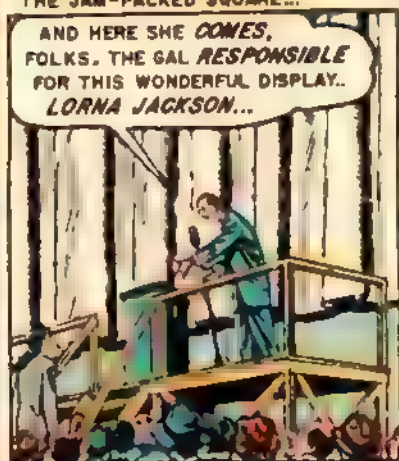


YAAAAAAHHHH!

LORNA STARED DOWN AT THE GURGLING, STEAMING, LIQUID-FILLED TANK...

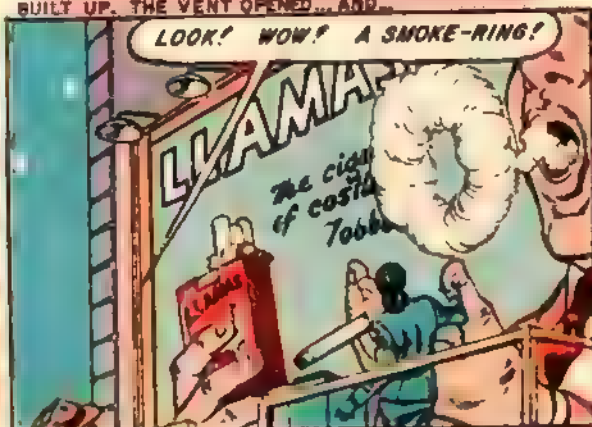
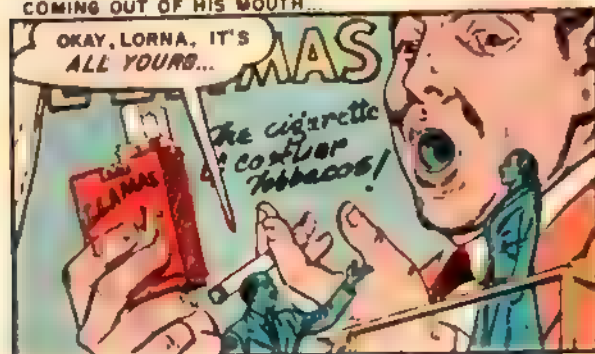
LORNA PRESSED THE SWITCH. THE LID SWUNG SHUT

SHE SLIPPED OUT OF THE OFFICE AND DOWN THE BACK STAIRS INTO THE JAM-PACKED SQUARE...

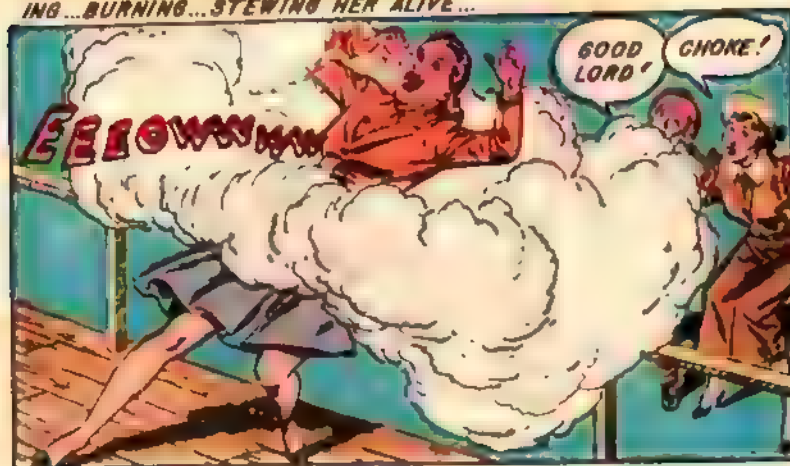


LORNA STOOD ALONE UPON THE SPEAKER'S PLATFORM, ACKNOWLEDGING THE CROWD'S WILD CHEERING. THE DRAPES COVERING THE SIGN FELL AWAY, REVEALING A MAN'S HEAD...LIPS PURSED...IN ONE HAND, A PACK OF LLAMAS...IN THE OTHER, A LIT CIGARETTE JUST COMING OUT OF HIS MOUTH...

LORNA PRESSED THE REMOTE CONTROL SWITCH THAT ACTIVATED THE STEAM MECHANISM. THE PRESSURE BUILT UP. THE VENT OPENED...AND...



ONE AFTER ANOTHER, LIVE-STEAM SMOKE-RINGS POPPED FROM THE PURSED LIPS OF THE MAN PAINTED ON THE HUGE SIGN. AND THEN, STRANGELY, THE SMOKE-RINGS SHOOTING OUT OVER THE CROWD SPIRALED DOWNWARD, RINGING LORNA WITH THEIR SEARING HEAT...BLISTERING...BURNING...STEWING HER ALIVE...



HEH, HEH! THAT'S A HOT ONE, EH, KIDDIES? JUST SHOWS TO GO YOU... A GOLD POTATO USUALLY ENDS UP BAKED. BY THE TIME THEY SHUT OFF THE CRAZY BILLBOARD AND GOT TO LORNA, FOURTEEN LIVE-STEAM SMOKE-RINGS HAD DROPPED DOWN OVER HER, LIKE A CHILD'S RING-TOSS, COOKING HER TO A LOBSTER RED BLOB OF BLISTERED FLESH. MMMM, WHICH REMINDS ME. I'M HUNGRY!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

WEE, WEE! AND NOW THAT THE *GREEP* FROM THE *CRYPT* AND THE *VACUUM* FROM THE *VAULT* HAVE ENTER-TAINED YOU, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO WIND UP V K'S PEN-PERIODICAL WITH ANOTHER DELICIOUS DISH OF *DELIRIUM* COOKED UP IN MY *GRUDDY CAULDRON*, BASED ON A FAVORITE REEKING RECIPE OF MINE. YES, *HORROR-HUNGRY HIDIOTS*, IT'S YOUR *HOSSTESS* OF THE *HAUNT OF FEAR*, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO FEED YOU THE *FOUL FARE* I CALL...

WHERE THERE'S A WILL...

DOCTOR JAMES CROTTY AND LAWYER MILLARD WALKER STOOD IN THE MARBLE FOYER OF THE FARBEN MANSION AND SURVEYED THE CROWDED LIVING ROOM...

LOOK AT 'EM, DOC! LIKE VULTURES - WAITING AROUND FOR OLD MAN FARBEN TO DIE... WAITING TO SWOOP DOWN AND PICK CLEAN THE OLD BOY'S FORTUNE AS SOON AS HE GASPS HIS LAST BREATH.

AND THEY DON'T HAVE LONG TO WAIT, EITHER, WALKER. HE'S ABOUT DONE. HIS HEART IS READY TO GIVE OUT ANY MINUTE.



DOCTOR CROTTY AND LAWYER WALKER TURNED FROM THE LIVING ROOM PACKED WITH RICH OLD HAROLD FARBEN'S RELATIVES, AND CLIMBED THE LONG WINDING CARPETED STAIRCASE...

IN FACT, WALKER. ONE GOOD SHOCK WILL DO IT. ONE GOOD EMOTIONAL UPHEAVAL WILL MEAN THE OLD MAN'S DEATH.

WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THE CHANCE, DOC. I'LL DO THE TALKING. I'LL TRY TO TELL HIM AS GENTLY AS POSSIBLE...



THE DOCTOR AND THE LAWYER
PAUSED BEFORE THE AILING MIL-
LIONAIRE'S BEDROOM DOOR...

I DON'T THINK
WE OUGHT TO GO
THROUGH WITH
IT, WALKER! I'M
AFRAID HIS
HEART WON'T
STAND THE
NEWS, NO
LESS THE...

WE'VE GOT TO,
DOC. IT'S THE
ONLY THING WE
CAN DO! OTHER-
WISE THEY'LL
GET IT ALL...
HIS WHOLE
FORTUNE!

HAROLD FARBET, ONE OF THE RIC-
HEST MEN IN THE COUNTRY, SAT DOZ-
ING IN HIS LUXURIOUS BED. HE
STIRRED, PAINFULLY, AS THE DOOR
TO THE BEDROOM OPENED QUIETLY...



HAROLD
YOU
AWAKE?

HUH?
WHO'S THAT?
OH, IT'S YOU,
MILLARD.
JAMES COME
IN!

DOCTOR CROTTY AND LAWYER WALKER
CROSSED THE LUSHLY CARPETED
BEDROOM TO THE OLD MAN'S SIDE...

SEEMS LIKE EVERY-
BODY'S COME TO SEE
THE OLD WAR HORSE
PASS OUT OF THE
PICTURE, FM,
MILLARD JAMES?

YES, HAROLD.
YOUR WHOLE
FAMILY'S
DOWN THERE.
WAITING!



OLD MAN FARBET SMILED WARMLY

SURE IS NICE OF 'EM, SURE IS
NICE T'KNOW SOMEBODY CARES.
DOES A BODY GOOD T'KNOW
HE'S LOVED.

HAROLD, YOU CAN'T
GO ON BELIEVING
THAT! IT ISN'T RIGHT!
IT ISN'T TRUE!



THE SMILE ON HAROLD FARBET'S FACE FADED. HE
STARED AT HIS TRUSTED LAWYER

WHAT ISN'T TRUE,
WALKER? WHAT ARE
YOU SAYING?

THOSE PEOPLE DOWN
THERE. THEY'RE NOT HERE
BECAUSE THEY CARE ABOUT
YOU... BECAUSE THEY LOVE YOU.



DOCTOR CROTTY PUT HIS HAND ON LAWYER WALKER'S
ARM

PLEASE, MILLARD. IT'S TOO
LATE TO TELL HAROLD THESE
THINGS! HE HASN'T GOT VERY
LONG! LET HIM DIE IN
PEACE!

WHAT THINGS?
WHAT ARE YOU
TELLING ME,
WALKER? SPEAK
UP! WHAT'S THIS
ALL ABOUT?



MR. FARBET'S LIFE-LONG FRIEND AND LEGAL ADVISOR
SHRUGGED...

I JUST CAN'T SEE YOU MAKING A
FOOL OF YOURSELF, HAROLD. I JUST
CAN'T SEE YOU PASSING AWAY, LEAV-
ING YOUR MONEY TO THOSE THOSE
LEECHES AND BELIEVING THEY
LOVED YOU...

PLEASE, SHUT
UP,
CROTTY!
GO ON,
WALKER!



MILLARD WALKER'S VOICE WAS GENTLE... SOOTHING THE VOICE OF A MAN CONCERNED ABOUT HIS DYING FRIEND AND CLIENT...

YOU'VE WORKED **HARD** ALL YOUR **LIFE**, HAROLD, **AMASSING** YOUR **FORTUNE**. I CAN'T SEE YOU TURNING IT **OVER** TO THAT HOARD OF **DESPISING** RELATIVES. THEY'RE JUST **WAITING** AROUND FOR YOU TO **DIE** SO THEY CAN GET THEIR **HANDS** ON IT.

THAT ISN'T **TRUE**. THEY'VE COME BECAUSE

THEY'VE **COME**. BECAUSE THE MOMENT THEY'VE **DREAMED** OF IS **CLOSE** AT **HAND**. THEY'VE COME BECAUSE THEY **SMELL** THOSE **MINTY** DOLLAR SIGNS. THEY'VE **WAITED** FOR THIS MOMENT FOR YEARS...**PRAYED** FOR IT...

I **WON'T** BELIEVE IT. THEY'RE **CONCERNED** ABOUT ME.



THEY'RE **CONCERNED** ABOUT YOUR **MONEY**? THAT'S ALL! LOOK, HAROLD. I DON'T CARE. IT'S YOUR MONEY. IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE IT TO THOSE... THOSE **VULTURES**, DO IT. I'VE SAID MY PIECE...

SUPPOSE... NOW, I'M NOT SAYING I **BELIEVE** YOU... BUT JUST **SUPPOSE** WHAT YOU **SAY** IS **TRUE**. WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME **DO** WITH THE MONEY?

BETTER TO TURN IT OVER TO A **WORTHWHILE** CHARITY, HAROLD... TO PEOPLE WHO **NEED** THE MONEY, AND WILL **APPRECIATE** IT... THAN TO TURN IT OVER TO THOSE **WORTHLESS** GHOULS.

IF... IF I COULD ONLY BE **SURE**! IF I COULD ONLY **KNOW** FOR **CERTAIN** THAT WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME IS THE **TRUTH**!



IF... IF I COULD **PROVE** IT TO YOU, HAROLD... IF I COULD **SHOW** YOU, WOULD YOU **CUT** THEM OFF... SIGN A **NEW** WILL LEAVING THE MONEY TO **CHARITY**?

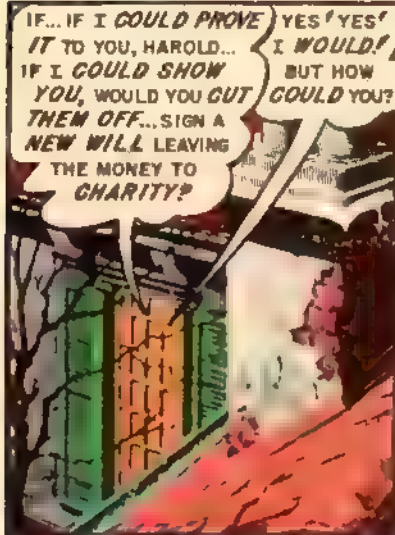
YES! YES! I WOULD! BUT HOW COULD YOU?

HAROLD, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO **HEAR** THEM, ALL OF THEM, **LAUGHING** OVER YOUR **DEAD** BODY... SPEWING FORTH THEIR **TRUE** FEELINGS... OVER YOUR **CORPSE**...

MY MY **CORPSE**?

YES, HAROLD. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO **LISTEN** IN ON YOUR **OWN** FUNERAL? WOULD THAT **CONVINCE** YOU?

BY GOD, WALKER! WHAT AN **IDEA**! YOU MEAN **STAGE** A **PHONY** FUNERAL?





BUT, WHAT IF I SMILE...OR SNEEZE?



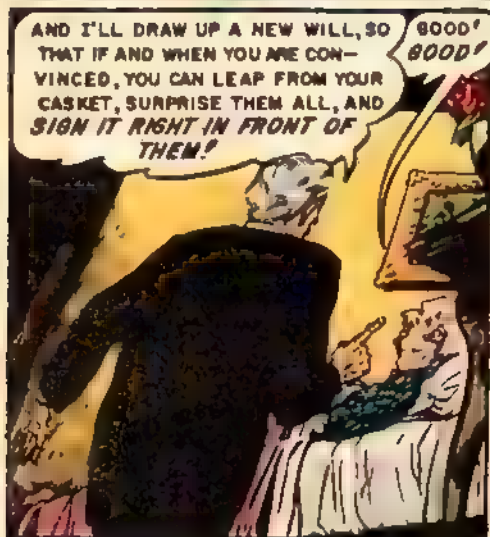
WE'LL ARRANGE A CLOSED CASKET CEREMONY...

THEN HOW WILL I HEAR?



WE'LL HAVE THE FUNERAL CHAPEL WIRED...HAVE A SMALL SPEAKER IN YOUR CASKET WITH YOU. YOU'LL HEAR EVERY WORD THAT'S SAID...

I AGREE! I AGREE...



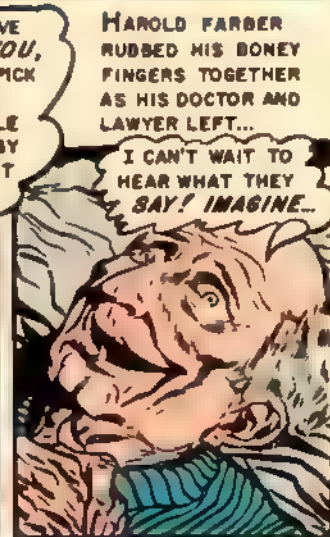
AND I'LL DRAW UP A NEW WILL, SO THAT IF AND WHEN YOU ARE CONVINCED, YOU CAN LEAP FROM YOUR CASKET, SURPRISE THEM ALL, AND SIGN IT RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM!

GOOD! GOOD!



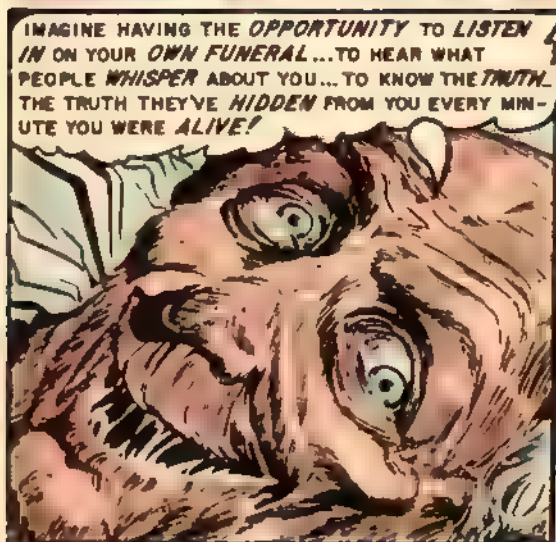
THEN EVERYTHING IS SET. OH, ER... WHAT CHARITY SHALL I MAKE THE WILL OUT FOR, HAROLD?

I'LL LEAVE THAT TO YOU, WILLARD. PICK OUT ANY WORTHWHILE CHARITY! BY GOD, I CAN'T WAIT...

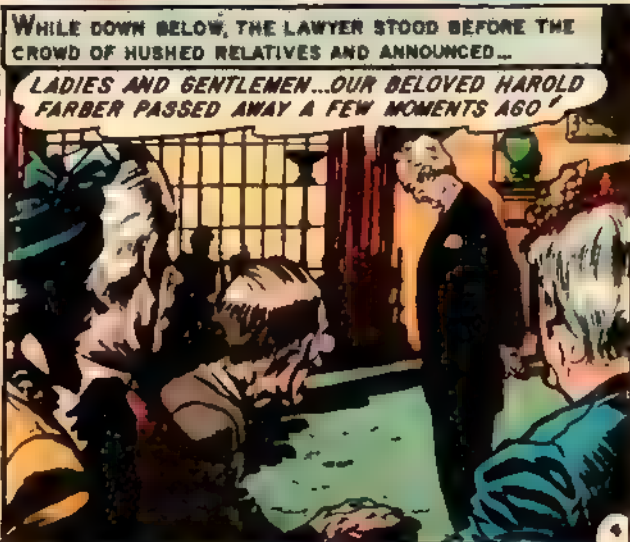


HAROLD FARBER RUBBED HIS BONEY FINGERS TOGETHER AS HIS DOCTOR AND LAWYER LEFT...

I CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR WHAT THEY SAY! IMAGINE...



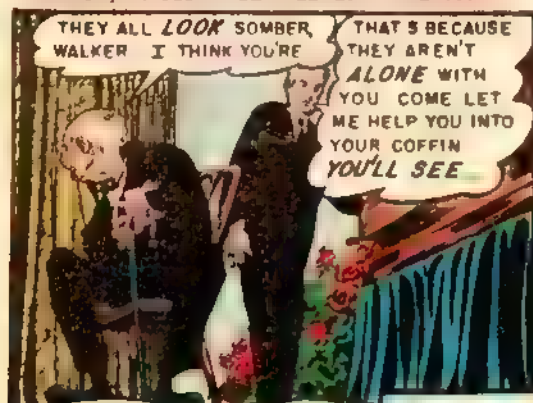
IMAGINE HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN IN ON YOUR OWN FUNERAL...TO HEAR WHAT PEOPLE WHISPER ABOUT YOU...TO KNOW THE TRUTH. THE TRUTH THEY'VE HIDDEN FROM YOU EVERY MINUTE YOU WERE ALIVE!



WHILE DOWN BELOW, THE LAWYER STOOD BEFORE THE CROWD OF HUSHED RELATIVES AND ANNOUNCED...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...OUR BELOVED HAROLD FARBER PASSED AWAY A FEW MOMENTS AGO!

THE NEXT MORNING, THE FUNERAL CHAPEL WAS JAMMED WITH PEOPLE...RELATIVES AND FRIENDS THAT HAD COME TO MOURN HAROLD FARBER'S PASSING. IN AN ANTEROOM, FROM BEHIND HEAVY DRAPES, HAROLD FARBER PEERED AT THEM...



THEY ALL LOOK SOMBER, WALKER. I THINK YOU'RE

THAT'S BECAUSE THEY AREN'T ALONE WITH YOU. COME LET ME HELP YOU INTO YOUR COFFIN. YOU'LL SEE

MILLARD HELPED HIS AGED CLIENT INTO THE SATIN-LINED COFFIN. DOCTOR CROTTY STOOD BY, WAITING...

NOW HERE'S THE SPEAKER. YOU JUST LIE THERE AND LISTEN .. LISTEN TO THE WHOLE THING.

WHAT ABOUT AIR. IF THE LID IS CLOSED...



THERE'LL BE ENOUGH AIR TO LAST AN HOUR OR SO. THAT'S ALL THE TIME YOU'LL NEED. I'M CERTAIN.

ALL RIGHT. IF YOU SAY SO.



READY?

READY.

THE LAWYER CLOSED THE LID. MR. FARBER LAY BACK AMONG THE SATIN FOLDS. THE SPEAKER AT HIS EAR RASPED...



CAN YOU HEAR ME, HAROLD?

YES...



LAWYER WALKER WHISPERED...

ALL RIGHT. I'M GOING TO OPEN THE DRAPES AND LET THEM COME IN. NOW, LISTEN...



MR FARBER HEARD THE DRAPES SLIDE OPEN... HEARD HIS TRUSTED LAWYER'S VOICE...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN IN HIS DYING WISH, HAROLD FARBER REQUESTED A CLOSED-COFFIN CEREMONY. SO IF YOU WILL ALL FILE PAST THE COFFIN, WE'LL BEGIN...

LYING IN THE CASKET, HAROLD FARBER HEARD THE SOUNDS OF FOOTSTEPS SHUFFLING BY THE COFFIN.. HEARD FAINT WHISPERS. HE STRAINED TO LISTEN



IN HIS MIND'S EYE, HE COULD SEE THE FACES OF HIS 'MOURNING RELATIVES' FILING BY HIS CASKET AS HE HEARD...

ONE AFTER THE OTHER THEY CAME, AND HE COULD ALMOST SEE THEM AS THEY SAID...

INSTEAD OF THAT ORGAN MUSIC, THEY OUGHT TO BE PLAYING, 'WE'RE GLAD THAT YOU'RE DEAD, YOU RASCAL, YOU!'

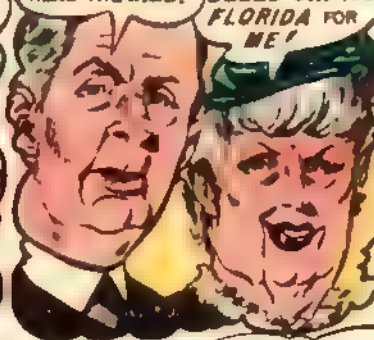
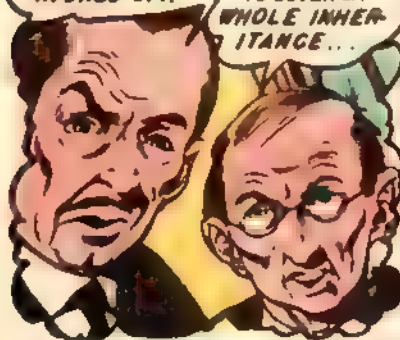
THAT'S A GOOD ONE, JOHN, AND SO TRUE! HEH! HEH!

HMMPH! IT'S ABOUT TIME THE OLD CROW KICKED OFF.

I'LL SAY! I'VE GOT ENOUGH DEBTS TO COVER MY WHOLE INHERITANCE...

CRIPES! I THOUGHT HE'D NEVER DIE. WHEN DO THEY READ THE WILL?

TOMORROW AT WALKER'S OFFICE. I'LL BE THERE WITH BELLS ON. IT'S FLORIDA FOR ME!



HAROLD GRITTED HIS TEETH, THE TEARS WELLING UP IN HIS EYES AS HE HEARD...

C'MON, HONEY. LOOK SAD! HE'S DEAD!

HOW CAN I? I'M DELIRIOUSLY HAPPY! BOY, CAN WE USE THAT DOUGH!

ALL MY LIFE I HAD TO PRETEND I LIKED THE OLD CRUMB! NOW I'LL GET WHAT I REALLY LIKED! A SHARE OF HIS FORTUNE!

MMMMMM! MONEY! MONEY! LOVE THAT WORD!



ONE AFTER THE OTHER, THEY CAME BY. HAROLD COULD SEE THEM... EACH ONE...

GOOD-BYE, FARTER HELLO, EASY LIVIN'! MY PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED!

THANKS FOR THE TOUCH, YOU OLD SKIN-FLINT!

THANK GOODNESS I DON'T HAVE TO SMILE AT HIS UGLY PUSS ANYMORE MAKING LIKE I LIKE HIM...



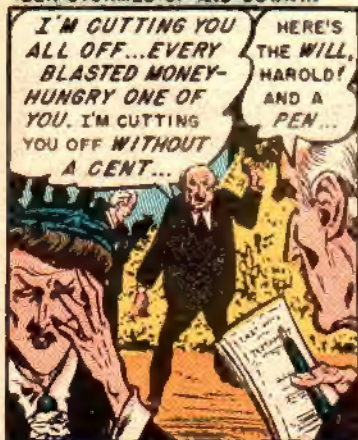
FINALLY, HAROLD COULD STAND IT NO LONGER. HE LEAPED FROM HIS CASKET...SCREAMING...

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH, YOU LIARS YOU GOOD-FOR-NOTHING FORE-FLUSHERS...YOU VULTURES... YOU LEECHES...

GOOD LORD! HE'S ALIVE!



THE MOURNING RELATIVES STARED IN HORROR AS OLD HAROLD FARBER STORMED UP AND DOWN...



I'M CUTTING YOU ALL OFF...EVERY BLASTED MONEY-HUNGRY ONE OF YOU. I'M CUTTING YOU OFF WITHOUT A CENT...

HERE'S THE WILL, HAROLD! AND A PEN...

I'M LEAVING MY WHOLE FORTUNE TO A WORTHWHILE CHARITY... TO THE...THE...



MR. FARBER SCANNED THE WILL WITH BLAZING EYES...



...TO 'THE HAPPY HOME FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN'...

MR. FARBER SIGNED THE WILL WITH A FLOURISH...



THERE...YOU MERCENARY RATS! YOU...YOU...GASP... CHOKER...

MR. FARBER DROPPED DEAD...



IN ANOTHER ANTEROOM, DOCTOR JAMES CROTTY WAS QUIETLY PAYING OFF THE GROUP OF ACTORS HE AND LAWYER MILLARD WALKER HAD HIRED TO SPEAK INTO THE MICROPHONE CONNECTED TO THE SPEAKER IN MR. FARBER'S COFFIN...



THANKS, FOLKS! JUST WHAT WE WANTED!

ANY TIME, DOC, FOR THIS KIND OF DOUGH!

AND AFTER THE STUNNED RELATIVES HAD LEFT, THE DOCTOR AND THE LAWYER STOOD OVER MR. FARBER'S COFFIN WITH MR. FARBER'S 'REALLY-DEAD-THIS-TIME' CORPSE INSIDE, AND CONGRATULATED EACH OTHER...

WELL, JAMES CROTTY, PRESIDENT AND TREASURER OF 'THE HAPPY HOME FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN'! HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HAVE JUST RECEIVED A CONTRIBUTION OF TWO AND A HALF MILLION DOLLARS?

JUST FINE, MILLARD WALKER, VICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF 'THE HAPPY HOME FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN'! JUST FINE!



HEE, HEE. WELL, THAT'S MY SLIME-SERVING, KIDDIES. BY THE WAY, I TOOK A TRIP OUT TO 'THE HAPPY HOME FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN' T'OTHER NIGHT. LOVELY PLACE! AND EMPTY LOT. FINE EDIFICE, TOO! A TENT. DARLING GROUP OF ORPHANS! TWO... GIRLS... AGES 29 AND 30, RESPECTIVELY! THEY'RE HELPING THE DOC AND THE LAWYER SPEND THE DOUGH WILLED TO THEIR 'DESERVING CHARITY'. BYE, NOW. REMEMBER... IF YOU'RE A FAN AND AN ADDICT OF E.C. MAGS, JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!



THE END

FLASH!

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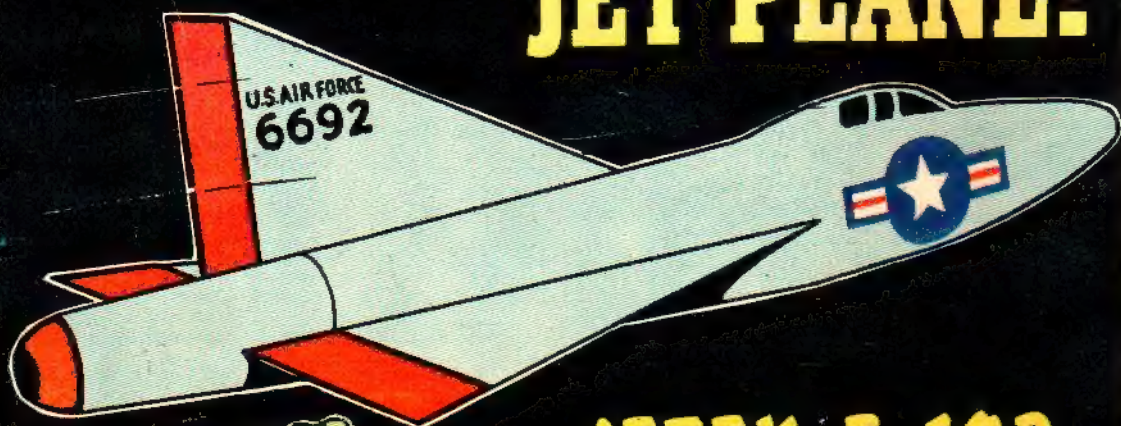
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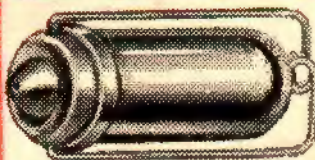
The Jetex F-102 is unconditionally guaranteed to fly if all instructions have been faithfully followed. If the Jetex F-102 does not fly, return the plane and the engine within 10 days for full refund.

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